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MACJ3-051

24 August 1969

SUBJECT: Lessons Learned Case Study of ARVN Assumption of Responsibility in Northern Kontum Province (U)

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1. (U) This case study has been prepared to describe an important example of Vietnamization of the war effort and to analyze Vietnamese, advisory and combat support aspects to assist similar operations in the future.
2. (U) It is derived from a Command Evaluation directed by LTG Charles A. Corcoran, CG, I FFORCEV, supplemented by inputs from MACV agencies and an interview with the Senior Advisor, 24th Special Tactical Zone, COL Alexander M. Weyand.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

J. F. Harris
J. F. HARRIS
Major, USA
Asst AG

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FOREWORD

1. (S) In the conduct of Allied efforts in Vietnam, the events occurring from 24 April into July 1969 in Northern Kontum Province have an enduring significance. Not only did ARVN forces acquit themselves well in this campaign in extremely heavy contact with Main Force NVA Regiments; they also conducted operations holding sole tactical responsibility in a sizeable Special Tactical Zone (STZ) area.

2. (S) As a result, a unique situation occurred. An ARVN Task Force (Task Force Lien) with an imposing variety and depth of American combat support, and assisted by US advisors at every echelon, engaged North Vietnamese maneuver forces in excess of two regiments supported by more than a regiment of NVA artillery. Moreover, operations were conducted in the region adjacent to the tri-border area, allowing NVA elements to retire into Cambodian and Laotian sanctuaries at will and to conduct attacks by fire from non-Vietnamese positions.

3. (S) Such was the situation. In the timeframe of this study, emphasizing actions of 5 May to 5 June, a pattern of lessons learned yields these broad conclusions:

a. THE CAMPAIGN OF TASK FORCE LIEN INTRODUCED A NEW DIMENSION TO ARVN WARFARE -- THE REQUIREMENT TO PLAN AND CONDUCT PROLONGED LARGE SCALE OPERATIONS. This was not anticipated in initial ARVN planning for the campaign at JGS, Corps and STZ level. In sustained combat ARVN's posture was less than adequate: ARVN staff functioning was unsatisfactory, higher headquarters support was absent, the replacement system was unresponsive and ARVN displayed nearly total reliance on US assistance to fill the void in these areas.

b. A CHANGE IS REQUIRED IN ARVN EMPHASIS FROM JGS TO THE LOWEST LEVEL OF ARVN COMMAND. ARVN force posture has become critical; ARVN forces must be postured and trained to fight sustained battles. The ARVN staff structure must be strengthened and all supporting systems must be focused on major battle areas and geared to execute the administrative and support tasks of sustained combat. Reliance on US assistance must be curtailed wherever possible.

c. ARVN FORCES HAVE DEMONSTRATED CONSIDERABLE PROFESSIONAL EFFECTIVENESS: THEY MUST PREPARE TO FACE GREATER DEMANDS. Considering the markedly changed circumstances of the Northern Kontum Campaign and the nature of the ~~campaign~~ results comment quite favorably on the dedication and durability of ARVN fighting units. But the same results could have been obtained at a much reduced cost in human and material terms. Many errors were made in staff planning and field execution of tactical operations. The Republic of Vietnam must now accelerate its training effort so as to hasten the preparation of its fighting forces for sustained

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combat and improved staff functioning. The ultimate goal must be the development of a professional competence to conduct imaginative tactical operations which do maximum damage to the enemy at minimum loss to ARVN ranks.

d. THE ARVN EXPERIENCE IN THE 24th STZ HAS underscored THE CONTINUING REQUIREMENT FOR US ADVICE, TRAINING AND ASSISTANCE. While the general approach of the Combat Assistance Team (CAT) concept may be followed, it is clear that a significant level of US advisory effort will be needed at the division and special tactical zone level for some time. This effort is important to the development of ARVN professionalism and the effective utilization of US combat support resources.

4. ~~(S)~~ In summary, the transition of responsibility in Northern Kontum Province may represent a watershed in the history of the Vietnamese conflict. At the time of this writing Allied efforts have focused decidedly on Vietnamization of combat operations. Therefore, planners of similar efforts elsewhere should avail themselves of the experiences and lessons learned derived from the efforts of Task Force Lien in the 24th Special Tactical Zone.

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SUMMARY OF LESSONS LEARNED RECOMMENDATIONS

1. ~~(C)~~ TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITY: The transfer of areas of responsibility should be undertaken only after thorough and comprehensive development of a memorandum of agreement. An efficient transition will have as its basis an agreement embodying the interests of both parties.

2. ~~(C)~~ COMMAND CONTROL AND COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS:

a. While recognizing that the development of an all-round staff capability is a long term effort, US advisors and JGS should constantly strive to train qualified ARVN staff officers. They are essential to the success of future independent ARVN operations.

b. ARVN commanders should be encouraged to utilize intermediate headquarters fully in order to reduce the span of control of directing headquarters.

c. When planning an operation and establishing a task force headquarters, ARVN commanders should act on anticipated signal requirements.

d. Higher ARVN headquarters should provide qualified staff personnel when units cannot meet requirements from their own resources. This is a matter which requires close attention from the top ARVN echelon down.

3. ~~(C)~~ PLANS AND OPERATIONS:

a. Rotation of ARVN units should be closely monitored; rotation should be based on the situation and unit capability as criteria and not dictated by number of days on operation.

b. MSF elements should be utilized primarily for reconnaissance, screening and surveillance operations and, when employed in conventional infantry roles, should be given appropriate combat support and missions consistent with their capabilities in such roles.

c. Movement of CIDG elements should be closely monitored and regulated to ensure timely deployment. Their propensity for late assembly should be a recognized planning consideration.

d. Continuing emphasis should be given to the correct conduct of BDA, with particular attention given to immediate insertion directly into the target area after B-52 strikes with sufficient friendly combat forces to counter enemy reaction.

e. US advisory effort and ARVN command emphasis, commencing at the JGS level, should be given to the need for advanced planning, notification and forecasting of requirements.

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4. ~~(C)~~ INTELLIGENCE AND INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT

- a. When a headquarters is augmented with additional troop units and a forward tactical headquarters is established, the ARVN intelligence staff should be augmented with additional qualified personnel by headquarters (corps or JGS.)
- b. US advisors should perform in an advisory capacity and avoid active participation in or takeover of the intelligence effort.
- c. An intelligence plan including essential elements of information (EEI) and other intelligence requirements (OIR) should be developed and followed as a corollary to the operations plan. Tasking of available assets should conform to this plan.
- d. Military Security Service (MSS) should investigate the possibility of security leaks within ARVN tactical headquarters and conduct periodic background investigations of assigned personnel.
- e. Communication security monitoring should be employed to determine the extent of information available to the enemy through intercept of friendly radio and telephone communications within ARVN tactical headquarters.
- f. US advisory and ARVN command emphasis should be placed on the development and use of all sources of intelligence, particularly PWs, documents and ralliers and other forms of battlefield intelligence.
- g. A reconnaissance plan, employing all available ground and air assets should be developed to provide close, continuous monitoring of enemy movements and activity. The plan should task alternate surveillance means to provide coverage when tactical, technical or weather factors preclude the employment of the scheduled means. The plan should be coordinated with all headquarters capable of providing reconnaissance support.
- h. A briefing should be prepared by the applicable US agency explaining the uses and limitations of IR intelligence prior to commencement of an operation such as this. The briefing should be presented to all US intelligence personnel who handle IR information.

5. ~~(C)~~ COMBAT SUPPORT:

- a. When a combined US/ARVN agency is to be established, all steps should be given prior planning and coordination in detail. The fire support coordinator should be an ARVN artillery commander.
- b. Physical organization of FSCC's must serve the need for effective coordination of combat support elements, including US/ARVN counterpart collocation. USAF and VNAF TACP's must be in the forward TOC.

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c. ARVN staff elements should be instructed in the priorities of support. A central agency should have the responsibility of coordinating the use of US and ARVN assets.

d. Extensive training in ARC LIGHT procedures must be given to US advisors and ARVN staff/commanders.

e. A priority system of employment of gunships should be initiated by the Aviation Officer in conjunction with the G3 Air.

f. USAF/VNAF asset employment planning should be carefully developed and closely coordinated.

g. Additional training should be given to ARVN units in techniques of helicopter combat assaults, use of gunships and MEDEVAC procedures.

6. **(C) SUPPLY AND LOGISTICS:**

a. ARVN aerial resupply problems should be addressed on a priority basis at JGS level while ARVN continues to rely on the use of US assets.

b. The possibility of an operational ration more palatable to the ARVN soldier should be investigated, with US support provided.

c. Capabilities of ARVN medical companies should be analyzed with a view to their expanded mission. ARVN forces should continue to improve medical triage.

d. Efforts to assist ARVN logistics should be directed at advising ARVN commanders to plan for sustained operations and take proper action through ARVN logistical channels. Emphasis should be placed on advisor restraint in attempting to solve ARVN logistical problems through advisor channels.

e. ARVN logistical staff officers at Corps and higher levels should visit tactical units in action to discover problem areas, taking action rather than awaiting formal requests from units.

7. **(C) PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT:**

a. JGS should examine the entire replacement system with a view to adoption of a more efficient system providing timely replacements for sudden and heavy combat losses and providing a replacement stream sufficient to counteract heavy losses over prolonged periods.

b. ARVN commanders should receive training in the command responsibilities for personnel accounting, to include accurate reporting of casualties and replacement requirements to higher headquarters.

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c. The MACV advisory system should make increased efforts to influence personnel management in developing ARVN for the greater role it must assume in the conduct of the war.

d. Current casualty tables should be prepared, maintained and distributed to all units in the field at all times so that more accurate casualty projections can be made.

8. ^U ~~(C)~~ CIVIL OPERATIONS AND REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT:

a. Planning for changeover of tactical responsibility should include all affected commanders and advisors.

b. Contingency provisions must be made by corps and JGS headquarters for continued support of pacification in the event that assigned pacification forces are temporarily redeployed.

c. Whenever a direct link between province authorities and ARVN commanders supporting pacification is weakened, liaison officers should be designated.

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PART I

THE TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR NORTHERN KONTUM PROVINCE

1. ~~(S)~~ Background

a. In January 1969, the Commanding General, I FFORCEV, reached verbal agreement with MG Lu Lan, Commanding General, II ARVN Corps, on the ARVN assumption of responsibility for northern Kontum Province. This agreement was never consummated in a written document. For tactical reasons the ARVN force designated to assume responsibility, the 42d ARVN Regiment and its command headquarters, the 24th STZ, were unable to assume responsibility by 1 Feb 69, the agreed effective date.

b. On 11 April 1969, after extensive discussions with MG Lu Lan, LTG Corcoran, the new CG, I FFORCEV, addressed a formal written proposal to the CG, II ARVN Corps, in which the imperative nature of early assumption of responsibility by ARVN for upper Kontum was set forth. This letter (APPENDIX A) was the first official step taken in this direction.

c. After General Lu Lan indicated general agreement to the proposal on 12 April 1969, a draft Memorandum of Agreement was drawn up and signed by both General Corcoran and General Lu Lan on 24 April 1969. On that date, the exchange of forces was all but complete. The conditions of the memorandum (APPENDIX B) were met in every detail by both parties.

d. These actions gave the II ARVN Corps, for the first time, direct responsibility for territory repeatedly contested by NVA and VC forces. Only minimum US combat support remained in the area, all of it secured by Vietnamese elements. In this unique situation, military activity has remained at a high level throughout the period commencing with ARVN assuming tactical responsibility. That fact is of prime importance to the purposes of this study.

2. ~~(S)~~ Lessons Learned

a. Lack of Formal Written Agreement.

(1) Observation: The transfer of responsibility was hindered by the lack of a formal written agreement.

(2) Analysis: From 1 February to 24 April while details of the transfer were being effected, no written "authority" was available to resolve questionable situations. The development of such a document would have required thorough staffing by both parties prior to the changeover.

(3) Conclusion: Without a Memorandum of Agreement the transfer of the area of responsibility could not be finalized. Many misunderstandings would have been avoided with a formal agreement.

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b. Difference in Objectives.

(1) Observation: US and ARVN views of key installations differed in this area. Hence certain problems arose concerning the security of installations regarded as vital by US commanders.

(2) Analysis: In certain locations the US still retained a special interest because of support requirements. The 4th Infantry Division Commander knew he would need helicopter landing zones, supply points, etc., to render support to the 24th STZ. He was therefore hesitant to withdraw his units unless appropriate security measures were taken by the replacement forces. The 24th STZ Commander was reluctant to provide security to these installations, and the Memorandum of Agreement had not spelled out specific locations which would be of continuing US interest.

(3) Conclusion: A Memorandum of Agreement must be at once as comprehensive and as detailed as possible. Areas and installations of continuing interest to US commanders after the changeover should be the subjects of detailed written consideration.

c. US Reaction/Reinforcing Force Requirement.

(1) Observation: US units were required on short notice to assume certain reaction/reinforcing missions in areas of ARVN responsibility.

(2) Analysis: To provide reinforcement capability and liaison with the ARVN Task Force, elements of a US brigade operated in areas contiguous to the ARVN area of operations. US battalions assumed certain security missions in Pleiku so as to release all ARVN units for deployment into the Dak To area. As a result the 4th Infantry Division was restricted in performing its pacification support operations.

(3) Conclusion: US forces must anticipate adjustments in US force positioning in order to assume reaction/reinforcement roles as necessary in areas of ARVN responsibility.

3. ~~(S)~~ Recommendation It is recommended that the transfer of areas of responsibility be undertaken only after thorough and comprehensive development of a memorandum of agreement. An efficient transition will have as its basis an agreement embodying the interests of both parties.

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PART II

TASK FORCE LIEN: COMMAND CONTROL AND COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS

^U
1. ~~(C)~~ Background

- a. The 24th Special Tactical Zone (STZ) Headquarters is one of three major subordinate maneuver headquarters in II Corps Tactical Zone along with the 22d and 23d ARVN Divisions. The 24th STZ Headquarters is larger than an ARVN regimental headquarters but smaller than an ARVN division headquarters; because it is effectively staffed to control up to two ARVN regiments with the normal combat support and combat service support elements, it may be compared to a US brigade.
- b. Prior to the transition to ARVN control, 24th STZ normally controlled the 42d ARVN Regiment, three scout companies and elements of an armored cavalry squadron. Frequently one or more ranger battalions were also placed under its operational control. Generally in the past no more than three maneuver battalions were committed in operations at any one time. On 5 May the 24th STZ had four maneuver battalions committed to the operational area. From 5 May to 5 June the number varied from three to eight, averaging 5.3 per day. Scout company commitment stood at 1.5 per day.
- c. During the period considered there were two major subordinate headquarters located in the operational area: the 42d ARVN Regiment and the 2d Ranger Group. As the operation grew in size and intensity, both of these headquarters established field command posts and were utilized as subordinate maneuver headquarters.
- d. On 6 May, Task Force Lien was organized, commanded by the 24th STZ Commanding Officer; a Task Force Tactical Operations Center (TOC) was established at Dak To. ARVN staff officers manning this TOC in addition to the 24th STZ Headquarters TOC (in Kontum) came from 24th STZ assets. II Corps Advisory Group provided personnel augmentation and US advisors were present in both TOC's on a 24-hour basis.
- e. Communication problems were greatly compounded by the lack of ARVN signal equipment to support both TOC's and the mountainous nature of the terrain in which the operations were conducted. Numerous relay sites were required; these were provided from US signal assets.
- f. During the operation there were US advisor teams located with all maneuver battalions and scout companies. Artillery forward observer parties were located down to company level. Within the TOC at Dak To were US G2, G3, G3-Air and FSCC advisor representatives. Further, there was an Army aviation liaison representative and an Air Force liaison

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team. A US liaison team from 5th Special Forces Group was in the TOC to control CIDG maneuver elements and to act as an intermediate headquarters for the OPCON MSF elements.

g. ARVN representation in the TOC at Dak To was initially inadequate but improved as the operation progressed. By the end of the reporting period there were ARVN representatives from G2, G3, Artillery and VNAF in the TOC.

2. TCL Lessons Learned

a. Utilization of Intermediate Headquarters.

(1) Observation: Though Task Force Lien did use available intermediate tactical headquarters to reduce the span of control, both the Task Force and OPCON units frequently bypassed these headquarters.

(2) Analysis: On frequent occasions both the Task Force headquarters and the OPCON units bypassed the 42d Regiment and 2d Ranger Group headquarters in both operational and administrative matters. Some OPCON units initially retained separate reporting channels to their parent units which created both operational and command problems. Failure of OPCON units to advise their control headquarters of operational problems was a serious obstacle to effective control. Moreover, both the 42d Regiment and 2d Ranger Group failed to pass on information and known problem areas to the Task Force headquarters.

(3) Conclusion: Intermediate headquarters were not fully used. Some OPCON units tended to report to parent units instead of control headquarters.

b. ARVN Staff Operations.

(1) Observation: The effectiveness of the ARVN staffs is severely limited.

(2) Analysis:

(a) Because of a lack of well trained, qualified staff officers the 24th STZ Commander's staff did not function effectively. As a result Col Lien had to devote excessive time to staff functions and providing guidance to staff officers.

(b) After 5 May, 24th STZ staff suddenly found itself controlling a division-sized element in the Dak To area, while maintaining a headquarters at Kontum. While the ARVN II Corps did not augment the 24th STZ staff, the II Corps Advisory Group did augment the advisor staff. Consequently most of the vital staff functions in the Dak To TOC for fire support and ARC LIGHT planning, intelligence development and planning and coordination of air movement were performed by US advisors, who were, in essence, integrated into the ARVN staff. This integration was so complete

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and the performance of US advisors so critical to the operation that, had they been withdrawn, the staff could not have operated effectively.

(3) Conclusion: The Task Force staff should have been augmented by II Corps with well trained staff officers to produce efficient staff functioning. When this cannot be done, US advisors must be ready to fill the gap to maintain operational effectiveness.

c. Tactical Operations Center (TOC) Effectiveness.

(1) Observation: The Task Force TOC at Dak To, as organized by ARVN, was not fully effective.

(2) Analysis:

(a) Initially US-ARVN counterparts were not collocated to facilitate rapid transfer of information when the Task Force TOC was created at Dak To.

(b) Because the G3 Air, TACP, Fire Support Coordinator, ARVN Arty LNO and FACs were located in different places, US advisory personnel had to perform a great amount of the TOC coordination.

(3) Conclusion: Only through the efforts and coordination of the US advisors was the Dak To TOC capable of supporting the operation.

d. Signal Operations.

(1) Observation: There was not sufficient signal equipment authorized to the ARVN signal platoon assigned to 24th STZ to support the tactical operation and a field command post.

(2) Analysis:

(a) As of 5 May, the 42d Regiment was using a four-channel radio relay system for Kontum. II Corps Signal Battalion subsequently installed a second four-channel system and a "hot line" for Colonel Lien was installed over the US radio relay system. A single 12-channel system would have sufficed.

(b) When Task Force Lien was organized, US signal equipment and personnel were used to fill the gap which was anticipated. A US signal officer and three essential radio relay sets were provided for communication from the TOC and Dak To.

(c) In spite of II Corps Signal Battalion assistance, there were not sufficient signal assets available within the corps area to support the operation and meet other corps signal needs. Additional ARVN signal support was not requested from JGS.

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(3) Conclusion: II Corps did not have sufficient signal equipment or personnel authorized or available to support the communications requirements of the 24th STZ. US augmentation was used to fill the void.

3. ~~TG~~ Recommendation It is recommended that:

- a. While recognizing that the development of an all-round staff capability is a long term effort, US advisors and JGS should constantly, strive to train qualified ARVN staff officers. They are essential to the success of future independent ARVN operations.
- b. ARVN commander should be encouraged to utilize intermediate headquarters fully in order to reduce the span of control of directing headquarters.
- c. When planning an operation and establishing a task force headquarters, ARVN commanders should act on anticipated signal requirements.
- d. Higher ARVN headquarters should provide qualified staff personnel when units cannot meet requirements from their own resources. This is a matter which requires close attention from the top ARVN echelon down.

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PART III

TASK FORCE LIEN: PLANS AND OPERATIONS

1. ~~(C)~~ Background

a. During the period 5 May - 5 June 1969, ARVN and CIDG forces located in northern Kontum Province were heavily engaged with a two-regiment NVA force supported by an NVA artillery regiment. The campaign was conducted in the general area immediately east of the Cambodian, Laotian and RVN Tri-Border area. ARVN and CIDG forces were primarily oriented on protection of Ben Het, a CIDG camp located astride Route 512 and within enemy artillery range of Laos and Cambodia. The high ground southeast of Ben Het, "Rocket Ridge", was secured early in the campaign by ARVN forces and used as a base for patrolling and combat assaults against the enemy.

b. Actions in the time-frame of this study, 5 May - 5 June, comprised three phases. Phase I (5-15 May) involved forces of three ARVN and two Mobile Strike Force (MSF) battalions screening the Tri-Border area west of Ben Het. Phase II (16 May - 3 Jun) was a six battalion-plus offensive operation conducted southeast of Ben Het targeted against elements of the 66th Inf, 28th Inf and 40th Arty NVA regiments. Phase III (3 Jun to conclusion) consisted mainly of bomb damage assessments (BDA) by multi-battalion ARVN forces and establishment of defensive patrol screens around the Dak To - Tan Canh - Ben Het area.

c. Total US, ARVN, and CIDG losses during the period 5 May to 5 June were 187 KIA, 905 WIA and 103 MIA of which 56 are believed KIA. Enemy losses were 1,254 KIA and 4 PWs captured.

d. A detailed order of battle is provided at APPENDIX C.

2. ~~(C)~~ Lessons Learned

a. Rotation Planning of ARVN Battalions.

(1) Observation: The typical length of time that an ARVN infantry battalion was employed in the operational area was 14 days. During the reporting period there were a total of ten instances of battalion exchange between the operational area and battalion base camps. Only one of these cases (22d Ranger Bn) was the result of tactical considerations.

(2) Analysis: With one exception (23d Ranger Bn) battalions were rotated out of the combat area within 14 days of commitment. In one instance (4/47th) this exchange involved a distance of 135 km, creating a substantial transportation problem. The battalion had not been in heavy contact and had not suffered substantial losses.

(3) Conclusion: Planning for the rotation of ARVN battalions was, in the majority of cases, based on non-tactical considerations. Battalions were rotated while still capable of conducting sustained operations.

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Unnecessary demands were thus placed on support transportation and other assets.

b. Mobile Strike Force (MSF) Employment.

(1) Observation: When MSF elements were employed in situations of sustained and heavy combat, their combat effectiveness was significantly reduced.

(2) Analysis: The normal mission assigned to MSF elements is reconnaissance in force (RIF) or surveillance. In the later part of Phase II, the commitment of MSF elements to areas in which heavy NVA contact occurred resulted in near total loss of combat effectiveness in two MSF battalions, forcing the replacement of both units.

(3) Conclusion: When MSF elements are committed into an area in which heavy combat operations are expected or occurring, special attention must be given to MSF combat support requirements, which are normally greater than those of ARVN units in such situations. Missions assigned to MSF element should be adjusted in keeping with their normal employment as light, highly mobile forces.

c. Planning the Employment of Mobile Strike Force Units.

(1) Observation: The timely movement of Mobile Strike Force units into and out of the operational area was marginal throughout the reporting period, a shortcoming that adversely affected operational plans.

(2) Analysis: Deployment of MSF units into and out of the operational area was lacking in close control. The 5th MSF Battalion, for example, was scheduled to replace the 3d MSF Battalion on 16 May; it did so on 20 May. The 2d MSF Battalion was scheduled to replace the 1st MSF Battalion on 27 May; this was accomplished on 29 May. The primary reason for these delays, failure of CIDG members to assemble when ordered, was due to inadequate CIDG control measures.

(3) Conclusion: Late deployment of MSF elements adversely affected scheduled movement of other units in the operational area.

d. Bomb Damage Assessment (BDA).

(1) Observation: BDA missions were not conducted in a timely manner and frequently resulted in heavy enemy contacts.

(2) Analysis: BDA was often executed 24 hours or more after ARC LIGHT strikes, giving the enemy time to recover, police the battlefield and regroup for action against BDA units. Frequently the BDA force lost valuable time in cross-country movement by foot. BDA forces were sometimes inserted by helicopter at a distance from the target area, again allowing the enemy force

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time to regroup. Almost without exception, ARVN BDA missions came into heavy enemy contact. Few were successfully completed and some BDA areas were never entered because of enemy pressure.

(3) Conclusion: ARVN forces did not conduct effective BDA primarily due to excessive time lapse between the time of the strike and unit insertion. This failure persisted despite continuous US advice.

e. Lack of Timely plans.

(1) Observation: ARVN plans were not developed in a timely manner.

(2) Analysis: Planning was neither farsighted nor realistic throughout the operation. A complete operations plan was never developed. Planning was conducted on a daily basis, at the highest level, with minimum of staff participation. Frag orders were repeatedly issued; minimum notice was given to combat support elements. Helicopter assaults were planned without sufficient consideration of time-space factors to mobilize the requisite resources; combat intelligence operations were not planned; re-supply of predictable consumables was handled on a last minute basis.

(3) Conclusion: ARVN planning procedures at Task Force, II Corps and JGS levels did not allow subordinate maneuver units and combat support units sufficient reaction time. This staff failure degraded friendly tactical effectiveness.

3. ~~(C)~~ Recommendation It is recommended that:

a. Rotation of ARVN battalions be closely monitored; that unit rotation be based on the situation and unit capability as criteria and not dictated by number of battalion days.

b. MSF elements be utilized primarily for reconnaissance, screening and surveillance operations and employed in conventional infantry roles only under extremely critical circumstances and after being given appropriate combat support. Such missions must be consistent with their limited capabilities to fight as conventional infantry.

c. Movement of CIDG elements be closely monitored and regulated to insure timely development. Their propensity for late assembly should be a recognized planning consideration.

d. Continuing emphasis be given to the correct conduct of BDA, with particular attention given to immediate insertion directly into the target area after B-52 strikes with sufficient friendly combat forces to counter enemy reaction.

e. US advisory effort and ARVN command emphasis, commencing at the JGS level, be given to the need for advanced planning, notification and forecasting of requirements.

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PART IV

TASK FORCE LIEN: INTELLIGENCE AND INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT

1. ~~(S)~~ Background

- a. On 24 April the 24th STZ had an established and functioning intelligence staff considered capable of handling the current and projected enemy situation. The 2d Brigade of the 4th Infantry Division had made available its intelligence files to elements of the 24th STZ.
- b. In late April the first indications of a significant enemy buildup in the Ben Het-Dak To area were noted. This buildup continued through the first week in May and reached approximately divisional size.
- c. The formation of Task Force Lien on 6 May to counter the enemy threat significantly altered the 24th STZ's intelligence task and organization. The 24th STZ took on divisional aspects and a forward command post was formed. These actions severely taxed the intelligence organization. The stresses of the reporting period surfaced significant weaknesses in numerous aspects of ARVN intelligence functioning.

2. ~~(S)~~ Lessons Learned

- a. Intelligence Organization and Management.
 - (1) Observation: Intelligence operations by the 24th STZ during the reporting period lacked direction and purpose.
 - (2) Analysis: Among many factors influencing quality/quantity of 24th STZ intelligence production the most important were organization of the intelligence effort and management of intelligence functions.
 - (a) The US advisory staff effectively assumed all intelligence functions except agent control, interrogation and document readout (the latter two being insignificant to date.) The Senior Advisor to the 24th STZ has stated that this situation was caused by "...having insufficient ARVN staff officers to operate a division-sized Tactical Operations Center (TOC) on a 24-hour basis while simultaneously operating another TOC at 24th STZ Headquarters in Kontum..." A similar situation existed with the US advisory staff.
 - (b) No joint or unilateral intelligence plan was known to exist by the advisors interviewed. No specific statements of intelligence requirements could be found nor was centralized tasking evident.
 - (c) The US intelligence staff relied heavily on intelligence reports and used traditional sources and assets only as a supplement. The ARVN staff concentrated on agent reports. The reluctance noted on the part of the ARVN to assume increased responsibility may be due to apparent US competence and active participation in intelligence matters.

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(d) Discussion and timely dissemination of intelligence were hampered by the suspicions shared by ARVN and US personnel that a security leak existed within Task Force Headquarters. This situation caused the majority of planning to be done at the highest level with a minimum of ARVN staff participation.

(3) Conclusion:

(a) The intelligence effort in the 24th STZ was uncoordinated. A possible security leak and US willingness to accept intelligence responsibility effectively halted the development of ARVN staff capabilities in intelligence.

(b) US intelligence advisory personnel did not follow accepted intelligence management procedures.

(c) There were insufficient qualified ARVN intelligence officers to operate two G2 sections on a 24-hour basis as dictated by the situation.

(d) The number of assigned US intelligence advisors was inadequate to function in a divisional G2 section. These company grade officers also lacked the necessary experience to direct intelligence functions at this level.

b. Sources of Combat Intelligence.

(1) Observation: Collateral intelligence (i.e., intelligence produced by other than special intelligence techniques) identifying and locating enemy units and determining their intentions was limited.

(2) Analysis: Lack of collateral intelligence is closely related to the exceptionally low number of PW, documents and ralliers taken by elements of the 24th STZ during the campaign. Various factors bear on this problem:

(a) Little effort was made by the 24th STZ to take prisoners. To some extent the ferocity of contacts and the great number of stand-off attacks precluded the capturing of enemy personnel.

(b) Neglect of collection of intelligence by tactical elements was the primary shortcoming. Though enemy action often precluded police of the battlefield, many ARVN soldiers refused to touch enemy dead for religious or superstitious reasons. The 24th STZ ARVN G2 is said to believe that searching KIA is a waste of time since NVA do not carry personal papers or documents into battle. Though MSF, US and even ARVN searches have proven this assumption false, lack of G2 emphasis in this area contributed to negative results. Battlefield police was also frequently limited by the enemy's "hugging" tactics, though these were meant

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to hinder US artillery/aerial firepower. After dark the enemy would often police the contact area. Little or no attempt was made to search bunkers or tunnels for items of intelligence value. As of 13 June, about 40 of the target areas struck by ARC LIGHT had not received BDA.

(c) The PSYOPS program consistently failed to produce ralliers. An intelligence advisor stated that PSYOPS aircraft in the area hindered combat operations since artillery was thereby restricted.

(d) US advisors stated their belief that the ARVN G2 maintains an excellent agent network in the Kontum City area and to a lesser extent in Ben Het-Dak To; details of this network were unknown.

(3) Conclusion: Sources of combat intelligence were not aggressively developed and pursued. Almost no battlefield intelligence was produced.

c. Surveillance and Reconnaissance.

(1) Observation: Collateral detection of possible threat build-ups or activity lagged behind detection by special intelligence means. Often the time lag was excessive, especially concerning enemy battlefield preparation and troop influx.

(2) Analysis: All standard reconnaissance and surveillance techniques were available to the 24th STZ. SLAR reconnaissance of the border was provided by I FFORCEV. Three scout companies were assigned and one US air cavalry troop was OPCON. Two sets of airborne personnel detection (APD) equipment plus operators were available. The following observations can be made on employment of techniques:

(a) No LRRPs were deployed from 12 May to 5 June although over 40 personnel assigned had received LRRP training.

(b) The scout companies were often used in a reconnaissance role. At other times they were used as a reaction force to reinforce battalions in contact.

(c) The air cavalry troop was used extensively for reconnaissance. It was deployed in two or three AOs daily and the advisors interviewed stated that coverage was good. ARVN armored cavalry units were primarily used for road security.

(d) Weather was not conducive to, but did not preclude, visual reconnaissance.

(e) The 24th STZ requested few Red Haze and photo missions. The intelligence advisor stated that to date Red Haze had produced little information of value and that ~~photo assets did not provide timely response~~. The delay between photo mission requests and receipt of photos

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and data was approximately seven days. Organic hand-held camera assets were not used.

(f) Employment of APD assets was frequently hampered by non-availability of supporting protective aircraft and by a technical limitation that the area had to be free of artillery fire for 24 to 48 hours.

(3) Conclusion:

(a) Reconnaissance and surveillance effort was minimal.

(b) The air cavalry troop was employed in its accepted role and produced worthwhile information.

(c) Employment of ground reconnaissance assets was inadequate.

(d) Other aerial reconnaissance and surveillance assets received limited use due to nonavailability of support and weather factors.

d. Intelligence Support.

(1) Observation: The 24th STZ received considerable intelligence support.

(2) Analysis:

(a) Headquarters I FFORCEV, the G2 Advisor II Corps and the 4th Infantry Division continually provided IR readouts to 24th STZ advisory personnel by flash message. Additional information expanding IR data was provided by II Corps US advisory personnel and US advisors at the 24th STZ. Interpretation of data discontinuities was also undertaken. Interviews with personnel involved revealed that they lacked current access to the full data base. In no instance did personnel appear to be qualified in the field; their general knowledge was derived from previous experience and unclassified sources. Moreover, 24th STZ advisory effort and planning depended heavily on IR reports and advisor analysis of these reports.

(b) Headquarters I FFORCEV established an intensified reconnaissance area around the Ben Het-Dak To AO to attempt detection of infiltration or exfiltration of enemy troops and supplies. Elements tasked to provide this coverage included the 4th Infantry Division, Kontum Sector, the 24th STZ, US Air Force reconnaissance agencies and specialized surveillance assets. Reconnaissance within the combat area was left to the units in contact.

(c) Analysis of the enemy situation was provided by Headquarters I FFORCEV, 4th Infantry Division, and the II Corps advisory staff. A number of these analyses were influenced, within security limitations,

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by special intelligence available. This information was disseminated through ISUMs, PERINTREPs, special reports and briefings. The 24th STZ Intelligence Advisor stated that the analyses and intelligence provided did not materially aid his efforts because they were too general or based on foregone conclusions, (e.g. "attack is imminent".)

(d) No information pertaining to intelligence support of the 24th STZ by higher ARVN headquarters was obtained in discussions with US advisors at 24th STZ or II Corps.

(3) Conclusion:

(a) Consistent with security regulations, all intelligence available to US agencies concerning the battle area was provided the 24th STZ.

(b) Analysis based on special intelligence was of limited value to the tactical commander when specific items were generalized for security reasons.

(c) Expansion or interpretation of IRs by unqualified personnel without verified information did not aid the ARVN commander.

3. (G) Recommendation It is recommended that:

a. When a headquarters is augmented with additional troop units and a forward tactical headquarters is established, the ARVN intelligence staff be augmented with additional qualified personnel by higher headquarters (corps or JGS.)

b. US advisors perform in an advisory capacity and avoid active participation or takeover of the intelligence effort.

c. An intelligence plan including essential elements of information (EEI) and other intelligence requirements (OIR) be developed and followed as a corollary to the operations plan. Tasking of available assets should conform to this plan.

d. Military Security Service (MSS) investigate the possibility of security leaks within ARVN tactical headquarters and conduct periodic background investigations of assigned personnel.

e. Communications security monitoring be employed to determine the extent of information available to the enemy through intercept of friendly radio and telephone communications within ARVN tactical headquarters.

f. US advisory and ARVN command emphasis be placed on the development and use of all sources of intelligence, particularly PWs, documents and ralliers and other forms of battlefield intelligence.

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g. A reconnaissance plan, employing all available ground and air assets, be developed to provide close, continuous monitoring of enemy movements and activity. The plan should task alternate surveillance means to provide coverage when tactical, technical or weather factors preclude the employment of the scheduled means. The plan should be coordinated with all headquarters capable of providing reconnaissance support.

h. A briefing be prepared by the applicable US agency explaining the uses and limitations of IR intelligence prior to commencement of an operation such as this. The briefing should be presented to all US intelligence personnel who handle IR information.

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PART V

TASK FORCE LIEN: COMBAT SUPPORT

1. **U** Background

a. Combat support present in the Dak To - Ben Het area at the time of the agreement was:

(1) US

Forward Command Post, 1-92d Artillery
Battery B, 1-92d Artillery (155mm Howitzer)
One platoon, Battery A, 1-92d Artillery (155mm Howitzer)
Battery B, 6-14th Artillery (175mm Gun)
Battery A, 3-6th Artillery (105mm SP)
One platoon, Battery B, 4-60th Artillery (M42, Twin 40's)
299th Combat Engineer Battalion

(2) ARVN

Two platoons, Battery A, 221st Artillery (105mm Howitzer)
Two 105mm Howitzers located at Dak Seang Special Forces Camp for camp defense.

b. Between 5 May and 5 June existing US support was augmented by four 155mm howitzers of Battery A, 1-92d Artillery; one 8" howitzer from Battery C, 6-14th Artillery; Battery C, 4-42d Artillery (105mm howitzer) which was located in an adjacent area of operation; and A Troop, 7/17th Air Cav Sqdn.

c. ARVN support was augmented by the repositioning of eight 155mm howitzers (Battery A, 37th Artillery and one platoon, Battery C, 37th Artillery.)

d. Artillery considerations.

(1) When the 1/92d Artillery expanded the established US forward command post at Dak To, it became the fire support coordination center (FSCC) for US artillery in that area. To form a collocated FSCC, the 42d Regiment and its direct support artillery units were encouraged to send representatives. Initially a 221st ARVN artillery liaison officer was provided; later the FSCC formed the nucleus around which the 24th STZ TOC was established.

(2) A total of 73,016 rounds were expended by friendly artillery between 5 May and 5 June. Enemy soldiers captured during the period expressed a fear of first round volley fire, an artillery concept practiced consistently by ARVN and US units in the form of periodic time on target (TOT) missions.

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e. ARC LIGHT considerations.

(1) ARC LIGHT requests were handled by US advisory personnel for security reasons. The Commanding Officer, 24th STZ, coordinated and approved ARC LIGHT requests proposed by the Senior Advisor 24th STZ at a daily planning conference. Once a strike was decided upon, the Senior Advisor submitted the request through US advisory channels. A total of 73 ARC LIGHT strikes were employed during the reporting period against 73 targets. This was nearly ten times the strikes flown from 1 April to 4 May against only 8 targets in the 24th STZ.

(2) Bomb damage assessment aspects are discussed in Part III, Paragraph 2d. Often there were 24 to 48 hour intervals between the target TOT and the entry of BDA troops into the target areas.

f. Tactical Air Considerations: The 24th STZ was responsible for providing tactical air support to the Dak To area through USAF FAC's and the tactical air control party (TACP) at Kontum. It was realized early that a forward TACP was needed at Dak To to coordinate tactical air requests. Additional personnel and equipment were furnished by I FFORCEV DASC A and a forward TACP at Dak To became operational on 7 May. On 1 June 1969, tactical air support was augmented by the commitment of nine VNAF A-37 jet fighters and VNAF FAC's to the Ben Het - Dak To operation.

g. Army Aviation.

(1) Army aviation assets were entirely provided from US assets. Attempts to control aviation assets from Kontum failed and on 5 May US aviation support personnel moved to Dak To to establish a forward aviation control center.

(2) During the reporting period an average of 20 slicks, 6 gunships 1 hook and 5 cranes were provided Task Force Lien each day.

2. ~~(C)~~ Lessons Learned

a. Lack of Total Combat Support Coordination.

(1) Observation: Lack of close coordination of support was one of the operation's greatest problems. This factor impaired close combat support as well as the functioning of the FSCC, causing delays in artillery support and resulting in conflicting requests.

(2) Analysis:

(a) As noted in paragraph 1-d(1) above the initial problem was the creation of a common location of artillery counterparts. Prior to collocation, ARVN did not coordinate in passing clearance information or post-air advisories. Similarly the G3 Air, Air Liaison Officer and FACs were

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initially all located in different areas. Once collocation was established at the FSAC, coordination among all fire support agencies, particularly artillery improved.

(b) Initially the TACP operated outside the TOC while G3 Air and FSAC were located inside the TOC. The TACP, once moved inside the TOC, was still separated from the Operations Section in which the G3 Air was located. This physical separation created problems of target request and clearance, causing delays in target processing.

(3) Conclusion:

(a) US-ARVN combat support counterparts must be collocated for optimum effectiveness of the FSAC. This applies to all echelons of control where multiple means of fire support are utilized.

(b) One centralized agency must be established to approve the use of aviation assets and to insure that interested agencies are notified.

b. Lack of Command and Staff Training in ARC LIGHT Employment.

(1) Observation: ARVN Commanders and staff require detailed training in the conventional methods of planning for and employing ARC LIGHTS. This includes a thorough understanding of all safety aspects concerning the strike.

(2) Analysis: Basic conventional methods of employing ARC LIGHT were not understood by ARVN staff officers and commanders. There was a dangerous disregard for troop safety considerations. US advisors were required to fill the staff planning requirement in this area and were exclusively relied upon to do so.

(3) Conclusion: US and ARVN headquarters failed to concentrate on ARC LIGHT employment and techniques; these techniques must be learned and used by ARVN forces. For the foreseeable future, US advisors will have to perform this function.

c. Lack of Planning/Control of all Combat Support.

(1) Observation: The ARVN force had available a large amount of combat support but its use was inadequately planned and controlled.

(2) Analysis:

(a) Language difficulties between pilot and support units often resulted in aborted missions.

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(b) VNAF FACs and the VANF ALO for Kontum Province/24th STZ were given the mission by II DASC of providing VNAF air support to ARVN forces at Dak To prior to 1 June. Due largely to inexperience, the VNAF ALO failed to coordinate VNAF support effectively. VNAF missions were regularly flown on the same targets against which US fighters were being employed. A decided lack of flexibility existed. Radio communication between VNAF and USAF was inadequate or unused.

(c) Gunships were regularly requested by ARVN commanders when other means of fire support were more appropriate. The use of gunships became a fire support cure-all for the ground commander.

(3) Conclusion: Only through continuous planning and proper control can combat support be effectively employed.

d. Advisor Influence in Combat Support Areas.

(1) Observation: Too frequently US advisors were required to perform combat support functions to insure operational continuity.

(2) Analysis:

(a) Medical: Ground units were not properly trained in Dustoff procedures. Essential elements of Dustoff requests were frequently incomplete, causing confusion and delay. After dark, ARVN units failed to illuminate the pick-up zone. At times the LZ was not prepared to receive a helicopter, or Dustoff was requested while contact was so heavy as to rule out a landing. Advisor presence tended to eliminate these errors.

(b) Artillery: Artillery was constantly check-fired in order to bring in tactical air strikes. Often the check-fire was not lifted after an air strike, causing a lapse in artillery support. Little attention was paid to fire support coordination techniques except by US advisors.

(3) Conclusion:

(a) Additional training is required in MEDEVAC request and employment procedures and in coordination techniques of artillery employment.

(b) Advisory personnel had insufficient time to advise and train the ARVN Task Force members in combat support employment largely because US performance of staff functions was, during this period, essential.

3. (C) Recommendation It is recommended that:

a. When a combined US/ARVN agency is to be established, all steps be given prior planning and coordination in detail. The fire support coordinator should be an ARVN artillery commander.

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- b. Physical organization of FSCC's serve the need for effective coordination of combat support elements, including US/ARVN counterpart collocation. USAF and VNAF TACP's must be in the forward TOC.
- c. ARVN staff elements be instructed in the priorities of support. A central agency must have the responsibility of coordinating the use of US and ARVN assets.
- d. Extensive training in ARC LIGHT procedures must be given to US advisors and ARVN staff/commanders.
- e. A priority system of employment of gunships be initiated by the Aviation Officer in conjunction with the G3 Air.
- f. USAF/VNAF asset employment planning be carefully planned and closely coordinated.
- g. Additional training be given to ARVN units in techniques of helicopter combat assaults, use of gunships and MEDEVAC procedures.

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PART VI

THE 24TH STZ: SUPPLY AND LOGISTICS

1. **~~(S)~~ Background**

a. During the reporting period, the ARVN supply system functioned in a satisfactory manner. Supply shortages on no occasion inhibited the accomplishment of missions. All supplies were moved by convoy to the forward logistical base; no combat essential (CE) or tactical emergency (TE) airlift was necessary. Requests for emergency supplies or equipment were processed by the most expeditious means with a follow-up in writing. General Lu Lan and the II Corps Staff monitored the situation closely.

b. Prior to the reporting period the Commanding General II Corps had ordered a buildup from a 60-day level to a 90-day level of supply. Due to consumption, a 90-day level was not reached but a level in excess of 80 days was attained.

c. The four battalions (11th, 22d and 23d Ranger Bns and the 1st Bn 42d Regt) most heavily engaged, suffering 90 percent of the total equipment losses, have been re-equipped to TOE authorization except for Cal .45 pistols. Sufficient equipment is available in supply channels to re-equip the remaining units during rest and refitting.

d. During the transition period 24 April to 5 May 69 there were no significant logistical transactions between the 4th Inf Div and the 24th STZ. The 4th Inf Div did not provide any logistical support to the 24th STZ during the period 5 May to 5 June.

2. **~~(S)~~ Lessons Learned**

a. Distribution of Supplies.

(1) Observation: ARVN helicopter resupply capability is minimal.

(2) Analysis: Due to the nature of the terrain, distribution of supplies to the units was effected by helicopter. These helicopters were provided exclusively by US units. Problems encountered were:

(a) Hot LZ's made external sling load resupply hazardous.

(b) Sufficient gunships were not always available for suppressive fires to protect logistical aircraft.

(c) The small size of most LZs precluded fixed wing resupply.

(d) Without a US advisor, ground units found resupply difficult and sometimes impossible.

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(3) Conclusion:

- (a) In areas where helicopters must be used for resupply, ARVN is totally dependent on US resources.
- (b) The problems encountered in helicopter resupply are not peculiar to ARVN.
- (c) US advisors on the ground are essential to the helicopter resupply mission, but this capability must be developed within ARVN.

b. Class I Supplies.

(1) Observation: ARVN rarely utilized operational rations.

(2) Analysis: ARVN units habitually use Class A rations instead of combat rations. The most common ration system used is for the unit S4 to purchase rations from the local market. The tendency to use Class A rations has the effect of requiring more space for resupply, providing enemy agents valuable intelligence, and wasting operational rations purchased by GVN.

(3) Conclusion:

- (a) ARVN units lack indoctrination in the value and purpose of utilizing operational rations.
- (b) Expanded use of operational rations would be more efficient than use of Class A rations and reduce many associated problems.

c. Medical:

(1) Observation: The Task Force Medical Company capability was limited by its authorized equipment. Medical triage (patient sorting) was attempted.

(2) Analysis: The 721st Medical company was not capable of treating in forward areas nor capable of treating non-transportable patients. Medical triage was attempted by the Medical Company and the 2d Field Hospital. This attempt did prevent some personnel with minor injuries from being evacuated to the field hospital. The Medical Company eight-bed facility also hampered treatment. MEDEVAC (DUSTOFF) was provided by US units.

(3) Conclusions:

- (a) The most serious drawback was organic inability to treat non-transportables.
- (b) A fully developed medical triage system will result in more efficient treatment and fewer minor injury evacuations.

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d. Advisor Influence

(1) Observation: Advisors attempted on occasion to solve logistical problems through advisory channels.

(2) Analysis: In several cases US advisors took it upon themselves to solve ARVN logistical problems. Advisors requests usually resulted in an input to the ARVN system at the corps level rather than through the normal chain. ARVN was hesitant to react to US-initiated requests.

(3) Conclusion:

(a) The ARVN logistical system is workable. When advisors take unilateral action, ARVN unit commanders rely on advisors to complete such actions.

(b) Actions on the part of advisors or US senior commanders that circumvent the ARVN logistical system degrade the system.

3. Recommendation It is recommended that:

a. ARVN aerial resupply problems be addressed on a priority basis at JGS level, while ARVN continues to rely on the use of US assets.

b. The possibility of an operational ration more palatable to the ARVN soldier be investigated, with US support provided.

c. Capabilities of ARVN medical companies be analyzed with a view to their expanded mission; that ARVN forces continue to improve medical triage.

d. Efforts to assist ARVN logistics be directed at advising ARVN commanders to plan for sustained operations and take proper action through ARVN logistical channels. Emphasis should be placed on advisor restraint in attempting to solve ARVN logistical problems through advisor channels.

e. ARVN logistical staff officers at corps and higher levels visit tactical units in action to discover problem areas, taking action rather than awaiting formal requests from units.

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PART VII

THE 24TH STZ: PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

1. (U) Background During the period 30 April - 5 June the 42d Regiment and 2d Ranger group suffered the greatest number of casualties and presented the most critical replacement problems. Since the present for operations strength of the 2d and 4th Battalions, 47th Regiment and the three scout companies remained within JGS prescribed limits, they are not discussed.

2. ~~(C)~~ Lessons Learned

a. ARVN Replacement System.

(1) Observation: The ARVN replacement system is not geared to provide timely replacements for sudden heavy combat losses.

(2) Analysis:

(a) The II Corps G1 submitted a loss estimate to JGS on 17 May 1969 for all II Corps units. This estimate contained the number of personnel authorized, assigned, total personnel shortage, replacements requested, projected losses (based on average losses over a five-month period) and total requirements. The personnel loss estimate was submitted because (1) the major units engaged had suffered significant casualties since 5 May, (2) the 42d Regiment as of 30 April was still short 288 of its authorized personnel, and (3) 2d Ranger Group was short 159 of its authorized personnel.

(b) But the difference between personnel present for operations (PFO) as compared to personnel present for duty (PFD) is even more significant. For the 42d Regiment, as of 30 April, 2359 were PFD but only 1828 were PFO -- a difference of 531. In the 2d Ranger Group the difference was 329 (1703 PFD, 1374 PFO). There are many reasons for this disparity. Both units fought in Operations BINH TAY 48/49/50 in January and February, suffering casualties and desertions. All lightly wounded are carried present for duty but not present for operations. Further, the 42d maintains three base camps and personnel are left behind to secure these areas and provide normal housekeeping even during major operations. The first replacements, on 16 May, were 48 EM for the 2d Ranger Group and one EM for the 42d Regiment. On 19 May the II Corps GI went to Saigon to discuss the replacement situation. At that time I Corps had priority on replacement fills and II Corps second priority. Though the G1 submitted an updated loss estimate to JGS on 26 May, both the estimate and the previous 17 May estimate fell short of losses sustained. The 42d Regiment received 34 replacements

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on 28 May, 46 on 2 May, 9 on 30 May and 101 on 31 May. The 2d Ranger Group received 24 replacements on 28 May and 64 on 31 May. On 1 June a manpower team from JGS headed by the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel visited II Corps and made an estimate of the personnel situation. At that time II Corps was given equal priority with I Corps on replacement fill. Sufficient replacements have been forecast by JGS during June and July to fill projected combat losses and bring the 2d and 42d to authorized TOE strength.

(3) Conclusion: The current ARVN replacement pipeline does not contain sufficient quantities of trained personnel nor is it responsive to immediate and heavy battlefield losses. Of particular significance is the fact that no officer or non-commissioned officer replacements were received during the critical period of 5 May through 5 June 1969. As of 5 June the 42d Regiment was short 214 of its authorized personnel and the 2d Ranger Group was short 521. During the reporting period the 42d Regiment sustained 308 casualties and received 191 replacements while the 2d Ranger Group sustained 302 casualties and received 136 replacements.

b. ARVN Personnel Requirements in Sustained Combat Operations.

(1) Observation: The 42d Regiment and the 2d Ranger Group were committed to the battle of Ben Het - Dak To for a period of over a month, requiring personnel replacements in proportions not experienced by ARVN commanders in previous operations.

(2) Analysis: In previous operations ARVN units were pulled out when heavy casualties were sustained. If required, these units were replaced by fresh units which had been refitted at their base camps. In the Ben Het - Dak To case this was not always possible due to the heavy commitment of all 24th STZ units. This problem was further compounded by ARVN commanders not taking an active interest in personnel accountability. Reports to higher headquarters were generally inaccurate and in some cases requisitions for replacements were not made.

(3) Conclusion: The survivability of ARVN units committed to sustained combat operations is seriously in doubt under the present inefficient system. Command responsibility for accurate personnel accounting is lacking and advisor emphasis in these procedures is required.

3. ~~(C)~~ Recommendation It is recommended that:

a. JGS examine the entire replacement system with a view to adoption of a more efficient system providing timely replacements for sudden and heavy combat losses and providing a replacement stream sufficient to counteract heavy losses sustained over prolonged periods.

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b. ARVN commanders receive training in the command responsibilities for personnel accounting, to include accurate reporting of casualties and replacement requirements to higher headquarters.

c. The MACV advisory system make increased efforts to influence personnel management in developing ARVN for the greater role it must assume in the conduct of the war.

d. Current casualty tables be prepared, maintained and distributed to all units in the field at all times so that more accurate casualty projections can be made.

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PART VIII

THE 24TH STZ: CIVIL OPERATIONS AND REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

1. (C) Background Two aspects of the 24th STZ situation in the reporting period combined to aggravate a number of problems in the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) sphere. First was the considerable size of the 24th STZ. The most significant factor, however, was the changed enemy situation which caused ARVN to commit all available forces to combat rather than provide security for pacification.

2. (F) Lessons Learned

a. Pacification Support Planning

(1) Observation: Although province headquarters was informed of the changeover approximately one month in advance, the Province Chief and the Province Senior Advisor (PSA) were not included in the overall detailed planning.

(2) Analysis:

(a) Lack of coordination was evident. For example, ARVN artillery was assigned a direct support mission for LOC security forces. As a result, requests for fire on H&I and intelligence targets by RF/PF were being turned down. Planning in this instance should have included the US commander, ARVN commander with his advisor, and the Province Chief with his advisor.

(b) As the Ben Het - Dak To build-up commenced it became apparent that the 24th STZ could not carry out its pacification mission as well as fight a major battle. But higher headquarters made no provision for the continued support of pacification and the entire burden fell on province resources.

(c) Conclusion: Numerous avoidable problems occurred during the transition period because of lack of coordination. Lack of contingency plans for continued support by higher headquarters hampered pacification efforts.

b. Command Relationships.

(1) Observation: There was no close continuous liaison between 24th STZ and province elements. To the extent that contact was maintained, it was through liaison established between advisors in the two headquarters.

(2) Analysis: As the fighting intensified, the Zone Commander had to devote even more attention to combat operations; personal contact with the Province Chief on pacification matters became infrequent. Militarily the Zone Commander was in charge of northern Kontum whereas the

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Province Chief retained political authority. Moreover, the Province Chief also commanded Regional and Popular Forces and conducted operations in the STZ. ARVN support of pacification missions became negligible.

(3) Conclusion: Lack of continuous pacification liaison and the stress of the combat situation caused poor coordination between province forces and ARVN forces.

c. Psychological Operations.

(1) Observation: Psychological operations during this period failed to produce tangible results.

(2) Analysis: During the first phase of the period, no PSYOPS were used. ARVN did not request PSYOPS support and province officials did not offer it. Due to US interest PSYOPS was used extensively during the remainder of the period. Operations consisted of daily leaflet drops, O-2B flights two to three times a week using loudspeaker tapes, leaflets and the Early Word System (using a live or recorded message from a Hoi Chanh as an O-2B broadcast to enemy troops whom the Hoi Chanh knows and who know him.) Over five million leaflets were dropped and over 23 hours of airborne speaker time were logged. The 24th STZ had a PSYWAR team located in the forward area, but results were negligible. No Hoi Chanhs were reported through Dak To district during this period though some (one confirmed) were said to have been received by 24th STZ and evacuated through ARVN channels. The NVA soldiers in the 24th STZ were young, new to South Vietnam, and taught that they would be killed if captured. Thus few quality prisoners were taken for PSYOPS exploitation. The heavy concentration of NVA in this area may have had psychological aims. Province advisors were convinced that one NVA goal was to discredit ARVN in the eyes of the population.

(3) Conclusion: Limited success can be expected from PSYWAR efforts against hard core NVA with no family ties in South Vietnam. Even more significant, effectiveness of PSYWAR efforts may be greatly restricted by a high level of combat activity.

3. TG Recommendation It is recommended that:

a. Planning for changeover of tactical responsibility should include all affected commanders and advisors.

b. Contingency provisions must be made by corps and JGS headquarters for continued support of pacification in the event that assigned pacification forces are temporarily redeployed.

c. Whenever a direct link between province authorities and ARVN commanders supporting pacification is weakened, liaison officers should be designated.

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Major General Lu Mong Lan
Commanding General
II Corps
Pleiku, Republic of Vietnam

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SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED AT TWO YEAR
INTERVALS DECLASSIFIED ON DEC. 31 77.

Dear General Lu Lan:

(S) With the onset of the Binh Dinh Pacification Campaign imminent, I feel that we should clarify arrangements in other parts of the area in order that we can focus our attention on that campaign. In particular, we should dispose of the matter of the allocation of forces in Kontum Province. As you know, my primary concern there has been and is the security of the population.

(S) The events of the past month have indicated that the enemy will try to gain political victories by attacking undefended or lightly defended villages and hamlets. Highly mobile forces must be ready to react at any time of the day or night. The probability of an attack against our military forces in Kontum by a substantial enemy force decreases with each passing day. Since I am reducing the number of units of the 4th Infantry Division deployed in Pleiku and Kontum to support the Binh Dinh pacification, I feel that where possible I must reduce the 4th Infantry Division Area of Responsibility. The excellent showing by the 24th Special Tactical Zone in Binh Tay 48, 49 and 50 and in more recent endeavors clearly shows that it is capable of assuming a larger role in the defense of this area.

(S) In order that the area of the 4th Infantry Division in Kontum Province can be reduced, I propose that the 24th Special Tactical Zone continue to assume a larger share of the responsibility for the pacification and defense of the Province. Specifically, I propose the following for your consideration:

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Major General Lu Mong Lan

a. A confirmation of the boundary between the 4th Infantry Division and the 24th Special Tactical Zone as established by you and General Peers and in effect before the post-Tet attacks. The boundary is indicated on the attached map. The 4th Infantry Division would assume responsibility for QL14 from Kontum south to Pleiku Sector. This would make the 3d Armored Cavalry available to Colonel Lien for security of QL14 north to Tan Canh and for use as a mobile rapid-reaction force, which he needs to come to the assistance of beleaguered villages and hamlets.

b. Knowing that you now rely on the 3d Armored Cavalry as a reaction force for the defense of Pleiku, I am prepared to direct Major General Pepke to designate one of his battalions located in the vicinity of Pleiku as a reaction force for the defense of the city.

c. The brigade of the 4th Infantry Division located in southern Kontum would also be charged with providing reaction forces to assist Colonel Lien as required.

d. Force Artillery will continue to provide two light or medium field artillery batteries and general support artillery as required to support operations of the 24th Special Tactical Zone. Aviation and signal support would continue to be furnished as it is now. The 24th Special Tactical Zone should likewise continue to provide security for US installations within its area of operation.

e. Force Artillery will continue to maintain the Fire Support Coordination Center at Fire Base 1 with continued participation by the 24th Special Tactical Zone.

f. Both Colonel Lien and the commander of the 4th Infantry Division brigade in Kontum must continue to maintain close and continuous liaison with each other to coordinate mutual tactical and support problems.

g. Colonel Lien should be directed to provide mutual support for the CIDG camp at Ben Het. He should be prepared to reinforce the camp when requested by the Camp Commander.

h. Finally, I would propose that to insure that there are no misunderstandings among our subordinates concerning their responsibilities, we jointly sign a memorandum of agreement on their responsibilities in Kontum Province.

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Major General Lu Mong Lan

(S) I would be happy to discuss in more detail any of the proposals made. General Timothy and his staff, as always, are prepared to assist your staff with the preparation of plans for the execution of the proposal. We should dispose of this matter with the utmost dispatch so that we can focus our attention on Binh Dinh.

Sincerely,

2 Incl
as

CHARLES A. CORCORAN
Lieutenant General, USA
Senior Advisor

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MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

ON

Responsibilities of ARVN and US Forces in The
KONTUM PROVINCE and along QL 14 North of Pleiku City

24 April 1969

1. (U) Purpose: The purpose of this Memorandum is to record agreements in effect between II Corps and I FFORCEV units in Kontum Province and along QL 14 North of Pleiku City. The agreement is effective 201200 April 1969.

2. ~~(C)~~ Responsibilities:

a. Commanding General, 4th Infantry Division will:

(1) Assume area responsibility for that portion of Kontum Province as indicated on the inclosed map and the security of QL 14 North of Pleiku City.

(2) Be prepared to reinforce 24th Special Tactical Zone upon request of Commander, 24th Special Tactical Zone. Size of reinforcement will depend upon the nature of the threat and the forces available.

(3) Maintain liaison with Commander, 24th Special Tactical Zone regarding mutual tactical or support problems and the exchange of information and plans.

(4) Provide the same effective artillery coverage along QL 14 as is now provided by two ARVN 105mm howitzers at fire base 17 (ZA 204715).

(5) Require Commander, 2d Brigade to maintain liaison with Commander, Kontum Sector and Commander, Pleiku Sector concerning security of highway 14 and populated areas along the highway.

b. Commanding General, I FFORCEV Artillery will:

(1) Provide general support artillery as required.

(2) Support operations within 24th Special Tactical Zone with a minimum of two light or medium artillery batteries.

(3) Maintain automatic weapons support in the Dak To-Ben Het area.

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(4) Maintain the Fire Support Coordination Center (FSCC) at fire base 1 to coordinate all ARVN-US fire support means available including operation of air advisory stations.

c. Commander, 24th Special Tactical Zone will:

(1) Assume area responsibility for that portion of Kontum Province as indicated on the inclosed map.

(2) Furnish security for US combat support elements in the 24th Special Tactical Zone area of operation or which support ARVN forces. Designation of those elements presently in the area follows (Commander, 24th Special Tactical Zone will be notified in advance when these units are to be withdrawn or replaced):

Field Artillery

A Battery, 3d Battalion, 6th Artillery (105mm SP)	ZB 153065
B Battery, 6th Battalion, 14th Artillery (8"/175mm)	YB 873257
Forward Command Post, 1st Battalion, 92d Artillery	ZB 007216
Platoon, A Battery, 1st Battalion, 92d Artillery (155mm)	YB 873255
B Battery (-), 1st Battalion, 92d Artillery (155mm)	YB 935188
Platoon, B Battery, 1st Battalion, 92d Artillery (155mm)	ZB 063267
C Battery, 1st Battalion, 92d Artillery (155mm)	ZB 007216

Army Aviation:

57th Assault Helicopter Company	Kontum City Airfield
321st Aviation Service Detachment	Kontum City Airfield

Engineers:

15th Engineer Company (LE)	ZB 045223
Platoon, 102d Engineer Company (CS)	AR 789898
Headquarters, 299th Engineer Battalion	ZB 045223
Headquarters Company, 299th Engineer Battalion	ZB 010215
A Company, 299th Engineer Battalion	ZB 010215
B Company, 299th Engineer Battalion	AR 783894
C Company, 299th Engineer Battalion	AR 789898
D Company, 299th Engineer Battalion	ZB 005215
Platoon, C Company, 815th Engineer Battalion	AR 789898

Signal:

Detachment 1, C Company, 43d Signal Battalion	Kontum City
Detachment 2, C Company, 43d Signal Battalion	Tan Canh
Detachment 3, 54th Signal Battalion	Fire Base 1

(3) Maintain liaison with Commanding General, 4th Infantry Division regarding mutual tactical and support problems.

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(4) Maintain a representative in the 52d Artillery Group FSCC at Fire Base 1.

(5) Provide ARVN artillery support as required.

d. Commander, 17th Combat Aviation Group will:

Continue to support 24th Special Tactical Zone on a mission request basis.

3. (U) Review: This Memorandum of Agreement will be reviewed in one year or whenever requested by either signatory.

/s/

LU MONG LAN
Major General
Commanding II Corps

/s/

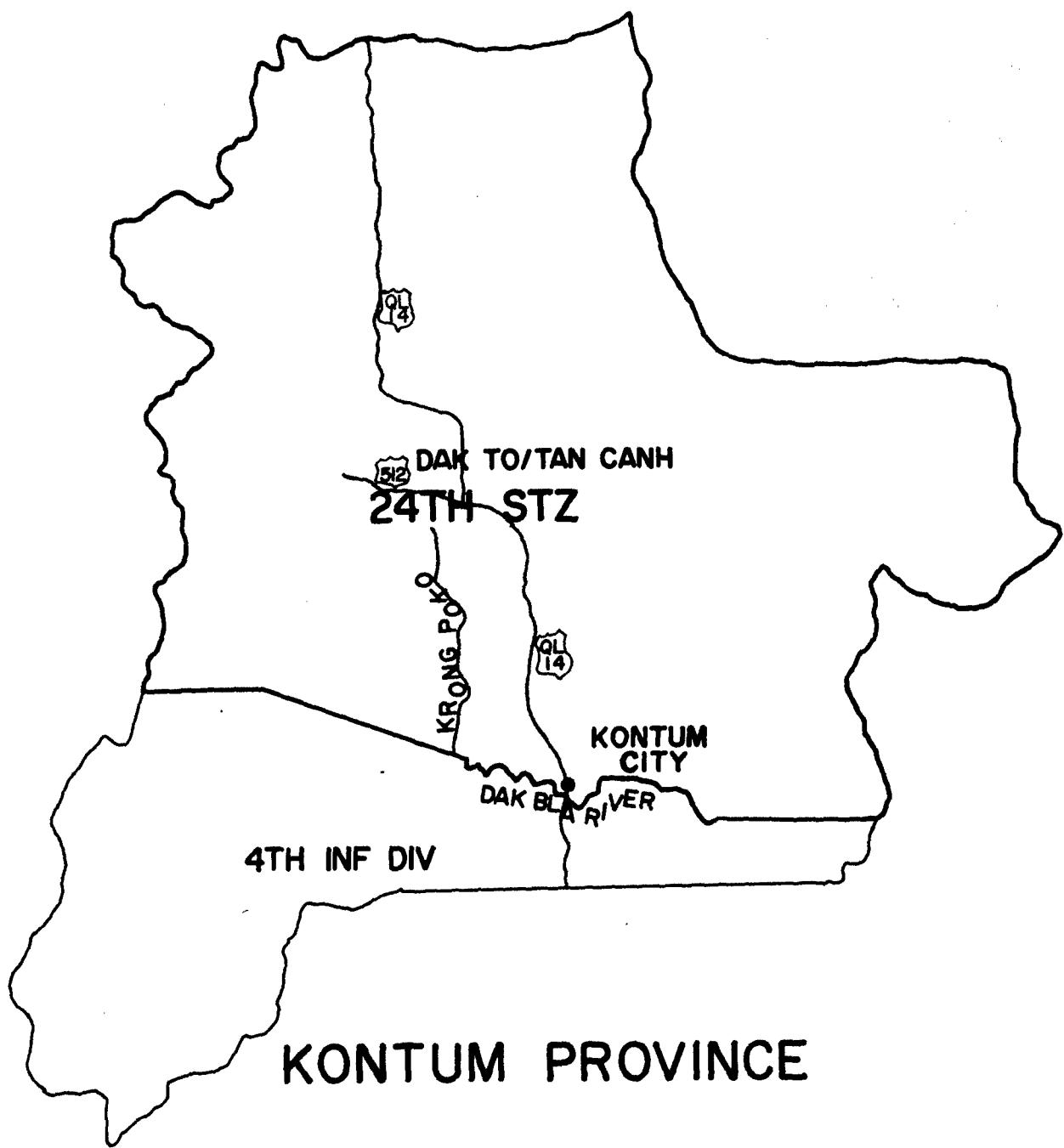
CHARLES A. CORCORAN
Lieutenant General, USA
Commanding I FFORCEV

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ORDER OF BATTLE
24TH STZ

FRIENDLY FORCES

TASK FORCE LIEN

HQ, 42d ARVN Regiment
42d Recon Company
1st Bn, 42d Regiment
2d Bn, 42d Regiment
3d Bn, 42d Regiment
4th Bn, 42d Regiment in reserve (Kontum City)

3d Armored Cavalry Squadron

14th Armored Cavalry Squadron (minus)

HQ, 2d Ranger Group
11th Ranger Bn
22d Ranger Bn
23d Ranger Bn

403d Scout Company

404th Scout Company

406th Scout Company

Tactical Command Post, 47th ARVN Regiment

2d Bn, 47th Regiment
3d Bn, 47th Regiment
4th Bn, 47th Regiment

1st Mobile Strike Force Battalion

3d Mobile Strike Force Battalion

4th Mobile Strike Force Battalion

5th Mobile Strike Force Battalion

Three Camp Strike Force Companies of Ben Het CIDG Camp

Camp Strike Force Company of Dak Pek CIDG Camp

Camp Strike Force Company of Plateau Gi CIDG Camp

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Two platoons, Battery A, 221st Artillery (105mm Howitzer)
later redesignated 63d Artillery.

Two 105mm howitzers located at Dak Seang Special Forces Camp

Battery A, 37th Artillery (155mm Howitzer)

One platoon, Battery C, 37th Artillery (155mm Howitzer)

US COMBAT SUPPORT

Elements of 52d Artillery Group

Forward Command Post, 1-92d Artillery

Battery A, 1-92d Artillery

Battery B, 1-92d Artillery

Battery B, 6-14th Artillery (175mm Gun)

One 8" howitzer, Battery C, 6-14th Artillery

Battery C, 4-42d Artillery (105mm, in adjacent area)

Battery A, 3-6th Artillery (105mm SP)

One platoon, Battery B, 4-60th Artillery (105mm SP, Twin 40's)

A Troop, 7-17th Air Cavalry Squadron

299th Combat Engineer Battalion

57th Assault Helicopter Company

321st Aviation Service Detachment

Detachment 1, C Company, 43d Signal Battalion

Detachment 2, C Company, 43d Signal Battalion

Detachment 3, 54th Signal Battalion

ENEMY FORCES

66th NVA Regiment

28th NVA Regiment

5th Bn, 24th NVA Regiment

304th Local Force Battalion

40th Artillery Regiment

K74 Artillery Battalion (85mm Gun)

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K41 Artillery Battalion (105mm Howitzer)

K42 Artillery Battalion (105mm Howitzer)

K32 Artillery Battalion (122mm Rocket)

K33 Artillery Battalion (122mm Rocket)

K25A Engineer Battalion

K25B Engineer Battalion

K25 Sapper Battalion

K28 Sapper/Reconnaissance Battalion

16th Company, K4 Battalion, 202d NVA Armor Regiment (tentatively identified)

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